

THE RAMBLER.

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"Be sure you are right, then go ahead."

DECEMBER, 1898.

NASHVILLE, TENN.

PRICE ONE DOLLAR A YEAR.

The Rambler.

THE RAMBLER is not a new idea. I originally designed it to be a sort of monthly supplement to the Epworth Era. Circumstances prevented that; but the idea met with favor, and I now send it out hoping it will help to make many readers happy. It will be a pulpit where I can preach; a platform from which I can lecture; an easel on which I can hang my sketches of travel; an "easy chair" where I can tell my tales to those who will listen; a drill by which I can sow good seed in the furrows of life. THE RAMBLER makes no pretention to the ambitious style and title of a magazine; it is only a modest little monthly; but it will be full of useful information, and will make everybody better who reads it. The price is One Dolllar a year.

Write to

THE RAMBLER,

NASHVILLE, TENN.

NOTICE.

Owing to unexpected delay, it was deemed best to omit the October issue of this monthly, and let it appear as the November number.

The Address on Methodism takes up all of the space in this issue, and crowds out other articles, which will appear later. We can furnish copies of this address for fifteen cents for single copies, and ten copies for one dollar.

THE RAMBLER.

VOLUME I.

DECEMBER, 1898.

No. 3.

THE PIONEERS OF METHODISM IN AMERICA. *

Victor Hugo said that "if we take the enlargement of the human mind for a result, then Dante counts for more than Charlemagne and Shakspeare than Charles the Fifth." Judged by this standard, which every deep-thinker on the problems of the world will doubtless admit is the right one by which to estimate the value either of men or of events, I hold that John Wesley was a greater man than Wellington, and the real pivotal point of modern progress was not Waterloo, but the little chapel in London where Wesley first saw the light. In the providence of God, that obscure spot became the birthplace of a movement which had in it "the potency and promise" of incalculable good to the world; that rediscovered the "lost art of the Gospel;" that revived primitive Christianity amid almost universal apostacy; that saved our Anglo-Saxon civilization from the madness of the French Revolution; that organized a vast system of aggressive evangelical agencies; and projected the mighty energies of its reform to the very ends of the earth. Whether we look at the subject, therefore, from the standpoint of a Methodist or from the outside of the denominational circle, I think we must admit that the rise of Methodism was unquestionably the greatest event of the eighteenth century. No wonder Macauley poured his withering scorn on the contemptible "brood of authors" who could write about that age and ignore its sublimest achievement. He predicted that this race of writers would become extinct, and his words have already been fulfilled. Wesley has been admitted to his rightful place amid

"The dead, but sceptred sovereigns
Who still rule our spirits from their urns"

in Westminster Abbey, and impartial history, gladly hangs its laurel on his shrine today. Mr. Leckey, one of the greatest of

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English historians, and one certainly not prejudiced in favor of Methodism, said that "the meeting in which Wesley professed conversion formed an epoch in English history;" and that the dazzling career of the elder Pitt, unsurpassed in political annals for the splendor of its conceptions and the glory of its achievements, must yield in "real importance to the religious revolution," Wesley led. He was right. For the problems with which the genius of Chatham grappled concerned the British empire; but the problems with which the genius of Wesley grappled concerned the whole human race. The one dealt with the policies and interests of a great nation, the other with the principles and forces that lie at the heart of all civilization and all progress.

IMPORTANCE OF THE THEME.

The subject we have to discuss is one eminently worthy of our serious consideration. It forms the most brilliant chapter in the annals of modern history. It is replete with the deepest lessons of moral instruction. It sparkles with instances of unexampled heroism. It burns with a lustre to which the glory of arms turns pale. It rings with the jubilant notes of a triumph to which the shouts of the battlefield are tame. For picturesque incident, for thrilling adventure, for dauntless devotion to duty, for high moral chivalry and fiery valor in the cause of truth, the story of Methodism far surpasses all the tales of fiction and the legends of romance. It is to be regretted that we so much neglect this valuable study; that the demands of trade, the distractions of secular life, the dissipations of society, and alas, perhaps also the skepticism of the age easily incredulous of spiritual truth and the mighty miracles of that regeneration effected by Methodism, leave us so little time or inclination for the annals of a conflict unequalled in its grandeur by any ever waged by man.

REAL HEROES.

The Pioneers of Methodism in America were the real heroes of their age. They were not great men according to the world's idea and standard of greatness. They did not come upon the scene heralded by the blare of trumpet or boom of cannon—by the waving of banners or shouts of applauding multitudes. We see no glint of gold or wreath of amaranth upon their brow. There

is no pomp of power or splendor of regal circumstance that attends their train. We do not know them by the warrior's plume or chieftain's flashing crest. Yet, if we are not blinded by the glare of what the world calls "glory;" if we reflect calmly on the meaning of man and his mission on this planet; if we look below the surface of things and study the deep and permanent causes of human progress, it must be evident to every one that they are the real heroes of the world who fight its *moral* battles, though their names may never flash on fame's emblazoned scroll. What though no lofty shaft marks their place of rest, or moulded bronze defies the challenge of decay above their sleeping dust, or marble minster shrines the sacred relics where the pilgrim's foot may pause in reverence at their tomb? By every token they were heroes. They came from the heart of the world bringing primal messages from God to man. The anointing of Jehovah was upon them. They wrought their lives into the structure of time, and lifted the dark world upward to the light. Their devotion, their intrepidity, their faith in the innermost reality of things, their high-hearted scorn of shams, their victorious enthusiasm, their invincible purpose to uphold the moral order of the world, and beat back the forces that assailed it, made them heroic and entitled them to the perpetual admiration of their fellow men. It is said that Alexander the Great slept with a copy of Homer's *Illiad* for his pillow, and drew the inspiration of his mighty deeds from the recollection of its immortal heroes. So, too, may we kindle the flagging fires of our faith and zeal with the recollection of deeds far grander than any enacted on the plains of Troy. It is with the hope that the recital of this marvellous story will kindle in the hearts of our younger generation of Methodists a noble desire to emulate them, that I now invite you to a study of the men who, under God, reared the magnificent temple of American Methodism, and laid broad and deep and lasting the foundation of Christian civilization on these western shores of ours.

* * *

FROM THE LOWLY WALKS OF LIFE.

1. The first thing that impresses us when we look at the founders of American Methodism is that they were from the lowly walks of life. There is nothing new or strange in this fact, but it is full of profound significance. It links these men in a high

and hallowed association with the founders of the Christian religion, and constitutes one of the strongest proofs of their apostolic succession. For while

“ Helmed Cherubim,
And sworded Seraphim
Were seen in glittering ranks, with wings displayed,
Harping in loud and solemn choir
With unexpressive notes to Heaven's new-born Heir,”

yet such ecstatic vision was vouchsafed only to the humble shepherds who kept their flocks upon the hills of Bethlehem. The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. It is not heralded by outward circumstance or pomp or power. As silently, and yet as gloriously, as the dawn it overspreads the world. Jesus himself was born in a manger.

“ Bright on His cradle the dew-drops are shining,
Low lay His head with the beasts of the stall,
While angels adored Him in slumber reclining,
The Maker, and Monarch, and Savior of all !”

So, too, the first preachers of His gospel were uniformly what the world calls obscure and unlearned men. The Holy Ghost turned aside from the philosopher and the priest to call the artisan and the peasant to the service of the cross, and, passing over the scholar and the scribe, he took the publican from the seat of custom and the fisherman from his nets, and made of them the leaders of the mightiest movement of the ages. This is not our way, and it is marvelous in our eyes. But God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, and He hath “chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, that no flesh should glory in His presence.”

A NOTABLE INSTANCE.

This lowly origin of Christianity did not escape the sneer of the world. It was the occasion of many an ancient jibe against it. In one notable instance the Roman emperor, Julian the apostate, endeavored to crush the church with weapons far deadlier than the faggot and the sword, the ordinary implements of persecution. With a diabolical intuition he saw that the real danger to the Pagan system of religion which he endeavored to re-establish throughout the empire, lay in the intelligence of the Christians. He therefore issued an edict forbidding the Christians to teach the

classics. He made it impossible for a believer in Christ to hold a position in any school in the Roman empire, which embraced the civilized world. He put knowledge under an interdict. He prohibited education. He sought to deprive the church of the advantages of learning, and doom its adherents to perpetual ignorance. And when they complained of the injustice of this decree, he replied with an imperial sneer at their reputed illiteracy, "Keep your ignorance—learning belongs to the Pagans. The followers of the Carpenter have no business with knowledge." Yet these lowly "followers of the Carpenter" steadily held on their shining way, and won over all opposition by the might of their "invincible weakness." Banished from the temples of learning, and denied admission to the venerable seats of philosophy, the butt of classic ridicule and of cultured scorn, the followers of the Lamb drew closer to their Lord and lifted higher still the ensign of the cross. They retired to secret groves and rocky glens and ivy-mantled grottoes, long forsaken by the Pagan gods, and sang their psalms and offered their prayers to the invisible but omnipresent Christ. And when at last their imperial foe fell bleeding with the Parthian arrow in his breast, and stern warriors bent above him, they heard him groan aloud, in mortal agony, and exclaim, "O, Gallilean, thou hast conquered!"

THE FUTURE.

The future belongs to men with moral ideas, whatever their outward circumstance may be! The hope of the world was with the Israelite under the lash of his Egyptian taskmaster, instead of the proud Princes of Zoan. The cause of humanity was with the captives weeping by the rivers of Babylon, not with their haughty oppressors. It was not Ahab in his purple, but Elijah in his raiment of camel's hair, who swayed the future. It was the Lollards singing in the fires of persecution, and not the mitred prelates, who kindled the flames that lit their paths to glory—who lifted the world up to God. The Tinker dreaming in the Bedford jail wielded a mightier sceptre than the monarch on his throne. It was not Charles the Fifth, with the diadem of Christendom on his brow and the armies of Europe at his beck, who changed the face of the world and turned the current of ages into other channels, but it was Martin Luther, an obscure monk, hidden away in the cell of a castle to escape the fury of his foes, but translating

the Bible into the vernacular of the common people. Verily, all history affirms and illustrates the truth that "God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom."

REVERSION TO TYPE.

Now in Methodism Christianity simply reverted to this original type. It passed over bishops and archbishops and cardinals and great men, and calling obscure and unlearned men to the service of the cross, commissioned them with divine authority and clothed them with celestial power, and sent them into the "focal and foremost fire" of the mighty movement to redeem the world. Let us not misunderstand it. It is true that Methodism was born in a university and cradled in the most ancient seat of English letters. It is true that its illustrious founder, Wesley, was a man skilled in various learning and in profound sympathy with the intellectual life of his age. It is true that it has always been able to point with pride to scholars in its ministry, like Coke and Clarke, and Fletcher and Walsh and McClintock and Summers. It is true that it has always fostered learning, and dotted every land where it has gone with institutions to promote it. It is true that it is today abreast of any denomination in the intelligence of its people and in the learning and eloquence of its ministry. But while Methodism has never undervalued education, it has never relied upon it. And it is an undeniable fact that the wide-spread revival of religion among the masses of the people, which was accomplished through the agency of Methodism, was due to the spiritual earnestness of an heroic race of men who could not claim the prestige of exalted rank or boast the learning of the schools, but whose hearts were on fire to tell "the old, old story, of Jesus and His love!" Lowly men they were, but men who shook the world with power. Not from the courts of kings, arrayed in robes of state, they came, but from the cabin and the camp, with rifle, ax and saddle-bags, and from the forge of the smithy begrimed with honest toil, and from the shop of the carpenter, clad in the workman's garb, and from the handles of the plow, fresh from turning the fruitful soil—with hearts aflame and tongues made eloquent by heaven to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and call poor sinners home to God. Like Paul, Asbury might have said to the heroic band of pioneers who followed his plume of fire through our American wilderness: "Ye see your

calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.”

Now this fact is profoundly significant of the nature and mission of the Methodist Church. It is a church for the masses. Its doctrines, its spirit, its purpose, its traditions, all adapt it to the people. It sweeps away the artificial distinctions of human society. It deals with man as man. It sees a child of God in every son of man. It recognizes no aristocracy but the aristocracy of character. It opposes and destroys the spirit of caste, and proclaims the equality of all men in Christ Jesus. It preaches the same gospel to the high and the low, to the rich and the poor, to the master and the slave; and is equally at home with its evangel of light and grace and salvation in the palace of wealth or the hovel of want, transforming, renewing, uplifting the masses of mankind by the power of the gospel of the Son of God.

MODERN DANGERS.

God forbid that Methodism shall ever lose the glorious distinction of being the evangel of the poor! God forbid that the day shall ever come when the poor and the ignorant and the outcast and the vilest of the vile shall not find a welcome and be at home around our altars. God forbid that Methodism shall drift away from the masses and court the classes of mankind, forsake the miner for the millionaire, and the pauper for the plutocrat. Better a thousand-fold only the housetops and the tombstones for our pulpits where great Wesley taught us how to preach the gospel to the masses of the people; better the tabernacle and the straw in the wilderness, where our fathers prayed and preached and shouted until—

“Heaven came down their souls to greet
And glory crowned the mercy seat;”

better a thousand-fold the simplicity of the Pioneers with their moral earnestness, rather than magnificent churches destitute of piety—splendid as a palace of ice, but as cold and lifeless, where devotion is only a form of words and worship is an esthetic art. The test of any religious movement is its effect in improving the lower orders of society, its success in converting a hovel into a home, a pauper into a man. Early Methodism won its brightest triumphs in this field, and if Modern Methodism is to hold its standards it must not forsake it. I do not undervalue any of the

agencies by which the Methodist Church of today carries on its work, and I institute no invidious comparisons with a former age. But I believe that more than all else we need a rebaptism of the Spirit that rested upon the Pioneers to lead us back into the slums of our cities and into the highways and hedges of the country, and into the very mouth of hell in headlong earnestness to save the race.

* * * *

GREAT EVANGELISTS.

2. But let us change our point of view, and we shall see that the Pioneers of Methodism in America were wonderful evangelists. They believed in revivals of religion, and they had them everywhere they went. And they went everywhere, in the steady and disciplined zeal with which they pursued their mission. And everywhere they went they "turned the world upside down." They went to turn it upside down, and if they did not turn it upside down they were themselves turned upside down. And that is a good rule yet for a Methodist preacher. If he doesn't make a stir in the community and turn things upside down, let him move on, and somebody come who will "overturn, overturn, overturn, until he shall reign whose right it is to rule." God Almighty ordained the Methodists to turn creation upside down, to reverse the current of the world, to regenerate the human race. It was a gigantic task, but these Pioneers sprang to the mission with tremendous earnestness. There is but one other class of religious propagandists that can be compared with the early Methodist itinerant preachers in America, and that is the Catholic missionaries who, a century before them, planted their missions along the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi. But even this comparison fails. The Jesuit priest, who dared the perils of the wilderness, was the emissary of a political power, and the missal and the crucifix were emblems of a spiritual authority that bowed the savage in obedience to Rome far more than to Christ. But the Methodist itinerant was the herald of civil and religious liberty—the advance guard of a social order in which the blessings of freedom crowned the cabin and the castle. Light sprang up in his path. He left a trail of splendor through the forests which his daring pierced. And his Bible and Hymn-book were the instruments of a moral regeneration that shed a heavenly benediction on

the world. It was Jesse Lee, and not Champlain; it was Asbury, and not Juarez; it was McKendree, and not Marquette, who gave the distinctive type to American Christianity and shaped the civilization of the west. We search in vain for a parallel to the sublime moral enthusiasm of the Methodist itinerants until we find it in the apostolic band who went out from Jerusalem at the bidding of their ascended Lord to preach the gospel to all the world.

A TYPICAL ITINERANT.

An incident is related of one of these early itinerants that illustrates their almost ubiquitous presence in the wilderness, and the stern spirit with which they did their work. According to the story, the Methodist preacher rode up to the cabin of a settler in the far Southwest, and desired to stay all night. The sturdy frontiersman recognized the preacher, and said: "Are you here, sir? I left North Carolina and moved to Georgia to get rid of you, but you found me there and converted my wife. So I left there and moved here, where I thought I was safe; but now here you are again!" "My friend," replied the preacher, "if you go to heaven you will find Methodist preachers there. If you go to hell I am afraid you will find Methodist preachers there. You see how it is here—you can't escape them. You had better give your heart to God, and go with us, and we will do thee good!" That is the way they did their work. Immediate and unconditional surrender on the spot—no service without a sinner saved! Would to God we had that spirit yet! Urged on by the driving fires of their faith and zeal, these "blood-besprinkled bands" swept forward in victorious advance over all opposition until "the wilderness and the solitary place were glad for them, and desert rejoiced and blossomed as the rose!"

THE OLD TIME CAMP-MEETING.

They were great revivalists. They believed intensely in the doctrines of the gospel, and they proclaimed them in trumpet tones. The camp-meeting was the rendezvous. It was the battlefield where they encountered the legions of hell, and on which they rarely or never met defeat. It was the scene of pentecostal glory and the theatre of apostolic triumphs. The people gathered by thousands to these great religious meetings. They remained for days encamped in rude cabins or in tents. The place resembled

the encampment of an army. In the midst of the assembled multitudes—usually in a grove of shady oaks—stood the “tabernacle.” It was a forest cathedral. The blue sky was its roof, fretted by the branches of the over-arching trees, and the glittering stars at night. It was carpeted with abundant straw, and lighted not with electric pendants, but with countless tallow candles, whose dim glare gave a double solemnity to the gloom. The “pews” were rude puncheon seats, often without any supports for the back. No carven chancel, with its cushioned kneeling place, invited the formal penitent to confess his sins; the “altar” was a rough bench, where the broken-hearted mourner found “pardon and peace to dying men, through Jesus blood was given.” The pulpit was made of boards riven from some forest oak, but it was a throne of mighty power. Sermons—not sermonettes—were delivered there; sermons on mighty themes—the fall of man, the universal atonement by the blood of Christ, the freedom of the human will, the moral government of God, the eternal retribution of justice divine on the finally impenitent sinner, the endless glory of the sons of God, fundamental truths of the gospel, going to the root of the solemn mystery of life—sermons of surpassing eloquence from lips that were touched with hallowed fire; sermons that it made an epoch in one’s life to hear, and that swayed the multitudes as the tempest sways the woods. The Pioneers did no half-way work. The sermons were not more potent than the songs they sung. No fantastic solos quivering in operatic evolutions of scientific melody on the curious ear; no skilled quartette regaling the senses with the balanced numbers of their art; no anthems swelling in choral chant, or deep-toned organ thunders rolling through the vaulted roof! No, no. They sang the songs of Zion, and made melody in their hearts unto the Lord. Their hymns were full of theology. There was a depth of truth and a fervor of experience in the music as it rose in tuneful numbers from the jubilant multitudes and was borne afar by the rushing winds. Sinners trembled while they sang:

“Come, humble sinner, in whose breast
A thousand thought revolve;
Come with your guilt and fear oppressed,
And make this last resolve.”

Or kneeling around the rude altar in the straw, they groaned

aloud for mercy, while the song rose high and clear, itself a prayer—

“ Show pity, Lord, O, Lord, forgive ;
 Let a repenting rebel live.
 Are not thy mercies large and free ?
 May not a sinner trust in Thee ? ”

Or they rose rejoicing in the unspeakable peace of God, while shouts of rapture shook the air, and happy voices joined in the loud-sounding joy—

“ What wondrous love is this,
 O, my soul ! O, my soul !
 What wondrous love is this, O, my soul !
 What wondrous love is this,
 That caused the Lord of bliss
 To send such precious peace
 To my soul ! ”

In the camp-meeting, in the school-house, in the rude log church, under the temporary brush-arbor, in the lowly settler's cabin, or in the stately home of the planter—everywhere—they were the same irrepressible and triumphant heralds of redeeming love.

THE FIELD.

It is impossible for us now, with the utmost efforts of the imagination, to realize the difficulties that confronted these heroic men. America spread out before them an unknown wilderness. The population was sparse, the settlements few and far between. The circuits these men traveled were as large as states are now, and their appointments hundreds of miles apart, with none of our modern facilities of travel for reaching them. In order to do their work it was necessary for these men to forsake home, and family, and friends; to endure cold and hunger and hardships; to traverse pathless forests; swim raging rivers; climb lofty mountains; face the lowering tempest and the lurking savage, and be literally in perils oft, and in dangers everywhere. There is no wonder that the thin line of itinerants, stretching from Nova Scotia to Florida, wavered before such tremendous odds. And waver they did. Methodism is very largely indebted for its wonderful success to that plan of itinerant evangelism put in operation by Mr. Wesley. It was especially adapted to spread the gospel in a new and rapidly developing country. It placed at the disposal of a central authority an army of preachers who were sent swiftly from point to point

until the whole country was reached by their effective ministry. But there was a critical moment in our early history when it seemed as if this admirable plan would be substituted here in America by a settled pastorate. The preachers hung about the cities. New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore had appointments to which the brethren seemed to feel divinely called.

CESAR LEADS.

At the battle of Alexandria a Roman legion gave way before the onset of innumerable foes, and was flying in headlong route from the field. But Cesar grasped a standard, and rushing to the front, rallied the routed host, and led them back into the fight, snatching victory from the very jaws of defeat. There was a man among the Pioneers in whose breast there burned the spirit of Cesar, and he now rode to the front of that wavering line in the critical moment, and fired the irresolute ranks of the Pioneers with invincible ardor! I wish I could paint, so that all could see the slender young Englishman, with the clear blue eye, the flowing locks, and the voice like a bugle, sitting his charger with the ease and grace of a cavalier. He is a born leader of men. There is something in his nature of the genius of Pitt in the cabinet, and of Napoleon in the field—the far-seeing discernment of the one, and the swift executive energy of the other. The clear eye of Wesley early discovered the transcendant fitness of this British youth to command, and his wisdom in dealing with the problem of American Methodism culminated in sending him to lead the Pioneers. By his wise pre-vision of the future that no calamity could cloud; by his firm faith in his cause that no disaster could shake; by his steady poise of character that no calumny could disturb; by his masterly inactivity when the storm of our American Revolution closed his way; and by his swift and irresistible advance the instant that way was opened, FRANCES ASBURY made Methodism a mighty fact in America!

A FLAMING COLUMN.

He led a flaming column, whose tread awoke the continent and shook the trembling gates of hell. Let us glance down that gleaming line of spiritual warriors, forming to advance, and take this continent for Christ, if it is only to catch a glimpse of some of its more illustrious leaders.

Yonder is one, riding fast and far through bleak New England, breasting the pitiless storms of a northern winter, to tell the story of the Cross. He is tall and massive in his build, with ruddy cheeks and flashing eyes. There is the verve of the warrior in his fearless port, and the rapture of an apostle in his burning heart. He meets a repulse as cold as the arctic winds. But no difficulties deter him, and no dangers alarm him, and no disappointments depress him, and no labors exhaust him. Bold, shrewd, witty, unconquerable, he forges right ahead, until the stolid mass of opposition yields, and the mortal fire of love that burns in his own imperial soul sets all New England on a blaze—that is JESSE LEE!

Yonder is another, swiftly speeding northward where Ontario's pathless forests wave. He steers his frail canoe on many a rushing stream; he lifts his voice of prayer or praise to mingle with the thunder of Niagara's plunging flood; he wraps his buffalo robe about him and lies down to rest upon the snow, while the keen, cold stars keep watch above him on the heights of heaven; he speeds along the frozen Ottawa to kindle the fires of redeeming love in many a northern home, until the fair land of Canada rejoices in the grace of Christ—that is EGERTON RYERSON!

Yonder is another, and one of the greatest of the immortal band. He sweeps from frozen Nova Scotia to sunny Florida, in his wide-ranging circuit, speeding onward "like an arrow" shot from the bow of God, riding exultant on the crest of a great wave of holy love. His life is a breathing rapture, a leaping flame of power, the very incarnation of victorious faith in God. Magistrates arrest him, mobs assail him, brutal desperadoes set upon him, drag him from his horse, beat him and leave him for dead on the highway. But he revives; he rallies; he rises; he springs to his task anew, and pursues his shining way like the very evangel of the Living God! That is FREEBORN GARRETSON!

Yonder is another, and still a greater. He blends the sagacity of a statesman with the fervor of a saint and the zeal of an apostle. He is plain in his garb, simple in his manners, fervent in his spirit, fiery in his speech. He traverses our Atlantic seaboard; he plunges through our Southern marshes; he follows the Indian trail amid the primeval forests; he crosses the Mississippi, and kindles the camp-fires of advancing Methodism in the very heart of the continent, and signals the distant mountain peaks of the farther west, with the coming of the kingdom of the Son of man!

That is WILLIAM MCKENDREE—the Grand Field Marshal of American Methodism!

And behind these press a shining host, like Winans and Waugh, and Mead and Finley, and Nolley and Cartwright, and Capers and Monroe, and Pierce and Green, and many another, with crests of flame and swords of fire—the noblest chivalry that ever rode this earth of ours! These men snatched the dying torch of truth from the altar of the cathedral, and the cloister of the monk, and the oratory of the priest, and bore the precious treasure forth like the winged messengers of God.

FORWARD!

Behold their mighty march along the century behind us. From the start, they front their mission with the port of victory. Above them waves the blood-red cross of Christ. They are begirt with the seven-fold thunders of apostolic power. They wave aloft their swords of living fire. They wheel and deploy their burning ranks over the wide fields of progress, keeping step to the swelling music of redemptious song:

“Louder than the thunder’s roar,
Or the fullness of the sea
When it breaks upon the shore!”

Glory be to God for such immortal men!

* * * *

FRIENDS OF EDUCATION.

3. But let us change our point of view, and we will see that the Pioneers of Methodism in America were great friends of education. They came before the day of colleges. Not many of them had enjoyed the advantages of even academic training. They had not been brought up in schools, or seminaries, or universities, or at the feet of learned Gamaliels. Yet they knew the value of knowledge, and they struggled to acquire it. They had few books, but they were close students. The times made them fearless and self-reliant, and religion was a stupendous force in their lives, bringing body, intellect and heart into the service of Christ. They studied their Greek and Hebrew Bibles by the light of the blazing camp-fire in the wilderness, or while riding solitary and alone along their vast circuits; and, in spite of these difficulties, many of them became masters of sacred learning. It is said that Dr.

Coke, whom Mr. Wesley sent over to superintend the work, filled as he was with Oxford ideas, dreaded most of all the difficulties he was likely to encounter in dealing with American Methodism, the *illiteracy* of the preachers. So he proposed to Asbury that they should be examined in conference as to whether they could *read* or not. Asbury assented, and shrewdly proposed that the examination take place on Monday. On Sunday he put some of **these men** up to preach. And they preached—preached as only old-fashioned Methodist preachers could *preach*. And the emotional little Englishman, Dr. Coke, was swept off his feet by the high tide of glory that came rolling in; and, rushing up to Asbury, he threw his arms around him, and with the tears falling on his cheeks, he exclaimed: “O, Bro. Asbury, Bro. Asbury! I don’t care whether they can read or not; I can’t preach at all! I can’t preach at all!” Well, there is a wide difference between reading and preaching. But these men could read! There were scholars among them like Wilbur Fisk and John McClintock. There were writers among them like Nathan Bangs. There were great debaters among them like Jesse Lee. There were great constructive statesmen among them like Joshua Soule and William McKendree and Robert Paine. There were matchless orators like Olin and Durbin, and Summerfield and Bascom, and Kavanaugh and Pierce and Simpson, whose eloquence entranced the nation, and made the heart of humanity leap high with rapturous hope!

FOUNDERS OF COLLEGES.

These men were the founders of colleges, the pioneers of education, the organizers of learning into new and more effective ministries than it had ever known before. And if the itinerant ministry is the invading army, pressing rapidly into new territories, and subduing them to Christ, the schools are the forts and arsenals that hold the territory won. And that church will be just as powerful and as permanent as the institutions of learning which it builds and endows. So while these heroic men swept in swift advance along our rapidly extending frontier, and set the whole land on fire with revivals of religion, they wisely entrenched Methodism in a carefully planned system of schools extending from the St. Lawrence to the Gulf. It is true, their work in this department at first met with disastrous failure; and at one time in the face of misfortune, Asbury questioned whether the Lord had

called the Methodists to build school-houses. But the intuition of the movement held them steadily true to their appropriate work, and they persevered with indomitable resolve to educate as well as evangelize America. So yonder but a little distance from Harvard they built Wilbraham Academy, and afterward the Wesleyan University. They reared Randolph-Macon College amid the pines of old Virginia, almost within hearing of the perpetual music of the Atlantic surf. On the verge of the illimitable forests of Canada they planted Victoria College, now Victoria University, in whose classic halls the genius of Christian learning still presides. They planted Alleghany College in the heart of the Pennsylvania hills, and Transylvania in the midst of the green fields of Central Kentucky; and, rushing on in advance of civilization's march, they set McKendree College like a jewel on the bosom of the Illinois prairie, while the savage tribes still roamed the plains around. They built Cokesbury, and afterward Wofford, College under the sunny skies of South Carolina. Deep in the heart of the Alleghanies, encircled by everlasting hills that keep loving watch above its classic halls, and vernal meadows musical with lapsing streams, and bosky dells whose gorgeous glooms allure the meditative soul to lofty thoughts on God and life, these great men laid the foundation of Emory and Henry College. And yonder in the dim, sweet woods of Georgia, amid

"Gorgeous glooms,
Soft dusks in the noonday fire,
Wildwood privacies closets of lone desire,
Chamber from chamber parted
By wavering arras' of leaves,"

where the

"Wood aisle doth seem
Like a lane into heaven that leads from a dream,"

these men of God, with reverent hands, built Emory College. And going far beyond their age, grasping the mighty meaning of the epoch in which they lived, boldly cutting themselves loose from all traditional limitations of the past, and anticipating the future in its brightest conclusions, these broad catholic men, with heart and soul aflame with truth, built the Wesleyan College, under our soft sunny Southern skies, and by Ocmulgee's sluggish flowing stream—the *first* chartered institution in the world for the education of woman!

HONOR CLAIMED.

Some time ago I was at Vassar College, New York, to preach for that noble institution. In the evening the President invited me to take a walk through its lovely grounds. We followed the winding avenue, crossed the little stream in the meadow on its rustic bridge, and climbed to the summit of a hill beyond. From that point we had a magnificent view of the Hudson river, with the intervening valley dotted over with farms, and beyond the river the Catskill mountains, every crag and peak wrapped in their mantles of snow, and ablaze with the splendors of the setting sun. It was a scene of transcendent loveliness, and as we gazed with rapture upon it, he laid his hand upon my shoulder and said: "Yes, this is glorious, but the real glory of Vassar is that it heads the procession for the education of woman." Then my Methodist pride took fire and my Southern blood began to boil, and I said: "Ah, sir, you'll have to yield *that* glory to another! It was not here on the banks of the Hudson, where winter weaves its dazzling robe of snow to cover hill and dale, or locks the streams in manacles of ice, that the movement for the education of woman was begun. Long before these stately halls were reared, and these shady avenues were planned, and these ample lawns resounded with the mirth of merry maidens bent on lore, the Pioneers of Methodism in America had built the first college for woman, 'away down South in Dixie—'

"Down in the land of cotton,
'Simmon seed and sandy bottom!'"

And when the historian comes to place the wreath of honor on the oldest of the goodly train, he will turn from the lovely daughters of the North—from Vassar and Smith, and Wellesley and Bryn Mawr, rich and splendid in their beauty—to place it on the modest brow of that fair daughter of our Sunny South that sits in queenly quiet amid the magnolias of Macon.

GREAT MEN.

These men committed Methodism to education. They identified it with every movement for the diffusion of useful knowledge. They made it a stable religious body, rooted in the organic life of America, instead of being only a fiery wave of enthusiasm, sweeping over the land and leaving behind it an eloquent memory of

grace and power. They were great when they preached a free salvation until the tidings rolled like billows of fire over awe-struck multitudes, and trembling thousands knelt in penitence at the cross of Christ, or rose in seraph flames of love to praise His hallowed name! They were great when grasping the meaning of the age in which they lived, and boldly cutting themselves loose from all traditional limitations of the past, they threw off all connection with the Church of England, turned the bright prow of Methodism to the future, and crowding every inch of canvas to the gale, swept out into the leaping seas of time, with head and heart on fire to save the world! But nowhere were they greater, or did they do a nobler work, or one worthier of our emulation than when, with unflinching faith and unflagging toil, they laid the foundations of that magnificent system of education which we see today in the temples of learning that dot our land from the Atlantic to the Pacific under the fostering care of Methodism. And as long as Christian education is the safeguard of civilization—and it has no other—so long will the work these men did in this department entitle them to the perpetual gratitude of their fellow-men; and the names of Olin and Fiske and Ryerson and Garland, and many another, deserve to be enrolled among the greatest benefactors of their age.

* * * *

CATHOLIC MEN.

4. But let us change our point of view, and we will see that the Pioneers of Methodism in America were the heralds of a broad and catholic type of Christianity, and inaugurated the era of fraternity among the churches.

We live in a happy time of interdenominational fellowships. In a union meeting now, we will see ministers of various denominations sitting together on the platform or working in brotherly harmony in the service of the Lord. And if you do not know them you can't tell one from the other, unless the Methodist brother *happens* to say "Amen." I say "happens" to say it, for the old-fashioned "amen," I am sorry to observe, is growing obsolete among us. However, there is something that still distinguishes a Methodist preacher. Some time ago I was traveling in Canada, and was talking with a brother minister on the train. Neither of us looked like ministers, and I am sure the subject about

which we were talking did not suggest that we were ministers, for we were discussing the Venezuelan incident, and President Cleveland's message about it, which my British friend thought was a piece of arrant jingoism. Yet though we neither looked like preachers, nor talked like preachers, I overheard a drummer on the seat behind us remark: "I'll bet my bottom dollar they are Methodist preachers!" But, unless you know them, or the Methodist brother says "amen," or betrays his fondness for chicken, you can't tell one from another in a union meeting. This is right. May it never be otherwise.

THEY BROKE THE ICE.

But it was not always thus. In the early days theological differences were sharp and distinct, and each denomination was an armed camp, that stood aloof from every other, and too often they turned their celestial artillery on each other instead of on the common foe. Calvinism was dominant and intolerant. The Methodist preachers were excluded from all pulpits, and denounced as fanatics and heretics. When Jesse Lee flung his banner to the breeze on Boston Common, with its inspired motto: "I desire a league offensive and defensive with every soldier of Jesus Christ," it was a target for fierce theological assault. But it was also the symbol of a new dispensation. A broader day was dawning, and the Pioneers of Methodism were its harbingers in the religious world. The ice of formalism was melted by the fervor of their moral earnestness, and the mists of error dissipated by the splendor of the truth they bore.

THE VALUE OF DOCTRINE.

These men had a theology. They proclaimed a creed. They recognized that law of our intellectual nature which subjects all truth to the scrutiny of the scientific reason, and formulates its convictions in definite symbols of belief. They were great doctrinal preachers, and Methodism owes its success, its stability and its massive strength today largely to the thorough work they did in implanting the doctrines on which it is based in the hearts of the people. They held, and they were right in holding, that there is a vital connection between creed and character. In the last analysis a man is what he believes. Loose opinions make loose conduct. Doctrines are to religion what the bones are to the body

Nothing is more dangerous than that molluscan type of Christianity which resolves theology into mere sentiment. Positive beliefs are the source of all constructive force. The gospel is spread over the earth by men who have convictions for which they are willing to die. But the glorious distinction of Methodist theology was its catholicity. It threw to the winds the old exclusive creeds of men. It shattered the narrow formalas of medieval theology. Over against the dogma of divine sovereignty of Calvinism it proclaimed the doctrine of the fatherhood of God. In opposition to the theory of a limited atonement, it proclaimed a universal redemption in Jesus Christ. In contrast with the Christian fatalism of Calvinistic decrees, it asserted the proper freedom of the human will. Instead of prescriptive privileges and hierarchic gradations of rank in the kingdom of God, it affirmed the essential spiritual democracy of grace—the equality of all men in Christ Jesus; the fundamental law of human brotherhood in the gospel, “where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all and in all.” These were revolutionary ideas in the theological world. They involved the reconstruction of the whole system of religious belief which held America in its grasp when the Pioneers appeared. No wonder the proclamation of these stupendous truths produced far reaching results of theological reform. The broad and sunny current of liberal Christianity which had its origin in these Methodist doctrines of free grace has been the great gulf stream of modern progress. It has melted the icy creeds of men or ever they came within the range of its generous influence; it has moderated every theological climate whose zone it entered; brought long-estranged communions near in the hallowed brotherhood of Christ, and made barren shores bloom with life and beauty under its genial warmth.

A LIBERAL CREED.

The beauty of the Methodist creed is that it inculcates liberality as a part of its belief. People of other communions may be as brotherly as the Methodist, but, in being so, they are inconsistent with their creeds. Look at it for a moment. The Methodist holds a creed which claims no monopoly of grace, excludes no one who differs in opinion, but recognizes the equal right of every other denomination of Christians as a branch of the true Church of Christ.

The Methodist Church is broader than the Roman Catholic Church. That church holds that it is the only true Church, and refuses to recognize as Christians any and all who do not enter its communion. Some time ago I met an intelligent priest on the train, and in conversation I asked him if he thought I would be lost because I was not now, and never would be, a member of the Roman Catholic Church. I had hardly finished the question, when he answered: "No, indeed!" "How are you going to save me?" I asked. Quick as a flash came the answer: "Through invincible ignorance!" Well, I am glad there is a hope even on his platform. But I hold that the Methodist Church is on immeasurably higher, broader, more rational and more scriptural ground than the Roman Catholic Church, because it does not have to say all the rest of the world are ignoramuses in order to save them. The only reason I would not preach for the Pope is because he would not let me. The exclusion comes from his belief, not mine.

The Methodist Church is broader than the Baptist Church. The Baptist Church holds that immersion is the only proper mode of baptism, and excludes from Church fellowship all who have not been immersed by a Baptist minister. It thus unchurches the vast majority of the Christian world.

Methodism holds the higher, broader, more Scriptural and brotherly belief that the mode is not essential to valid baptism, and that all who have received it, either by immersion or pouring or sprinkling, at the hands of an authorized minister, are truly members of the Church, and entitled to its fellowship. The only reason I don't take the sacrament with my Baptist brother is because he won't let me. But the exclusion comes from his belief, not mine.

The Methodist Church is broader than the Episcopal Church. That church holds the doctrine of apostolic succession: that it is necessary to a valid ministry that ordination should descend in an unbroken line from the apostles, and that that line runs through the Episcopal Church. The logical consequence, and the unfortunate practice of this theory is to refuse recognition and fellowship to the ministers of all other communions, however devout, useful and successful in Christian work they may be. Methodism repudiates the fable of apostolic succession, denies that the Bible enjoins any particular form of Church government, and holds the

true test of a valid ministry is the seal of the Holy Ghost. When the Holy Spirit puts his approval on a man it entitles him to full fellowship in the body of Christ. And the only reason I don't exchange pulpits with my brother, the rector of the Episcopal Church, is that he would not consent. But the exclusion comes from his belief, not mine.

Methodism sweeps away all of the unscriptural shiboleths of ecclesiastical Christianity, and reaffirms the fundamental truth of the fatherhood of God which makes all men brothers in Jesus Christ.

SHIPS!

The beauty of Methodist liberality is that it is the fruit of Methodist belief. His creed teaches him to "desire a league offensive and defensive with every soldier of Jesus Christ." He preempts no privileges. He issues no injunctions on others to prevent infringement of vested rights. He claims no monopoly of grace. Let me see if I can illustrate the broad, liberal, and truly Christian belief of the Methodist Church as regards other denominations. I am very fond of ships. Some time ago, being in New York City, I went down among the ships in the harbor. I saw a great many ships, and I observed that they belonged to different lines. There was the Cunard Line, the North German Lloyd Line, the American-Hamburg Line, the White Star Line, Red Star Line, and many others. Now, I said to myself, though these ships represent different companies, they are all sailing on the same ocean; they are all driven by the same forces of wind, or steam, or tide; they are all guided by the same chart; they are all engaged in the same business of promoting intercourse with the other hemisphere; and they all reach the same shores across the sea. Now, I said, that illustrates the *doctrine* of the Methodist Church as to the relations of the various denominations to each other. See, here is your Methodist standing on the shore, and he lifts up his eyes, and sees a noble vessel, steaming down the bay. Look at her! See the grace of her outline, the flowing curves, the perfect form. See how she rides the waves like a thing of life and beauty. Go aboard of her and she is finished in antique. Look at her costly furnishings—the mirrors, the cut-glass, the polish and the splendor. See how proud her passengers are, and how eager to welcome you on board. That is the grand old *Episcopal* ship! And she is headed for the open sea out yonder

with all sail set. And as she passes by your Methodist—if he is a good one and true to his belief—lifts up his voice and cries: “God bless thee, old ship, and give thee a prosperous voyage!” And let all the people say amen!

Yonder comes another. It is a very different sort of ship. It moves slowly but steadily through the waves. It was built for strength rather than speed—an iron ship—built to weather any storm and ride unshaken through any sea. And she will not alter or revise her *predestined* course one iota for all the tempests that may agitate the roaring deep. That is the grand old *Presbyterian* ship! And she is headed for the open sea out yonder, and your Methodist, as she passes by, lifts up his voice and cries: “God bless thee, old ship, and give thee a prosperous voyage!” And let all the people say amen!

Yonder comes another! What a monster ship she is! A double-decker; and she sets *deep* in the water, and the waves leap around her and play about her; for she is a favorite of the deep—the grand old *Baptist* ship! She, too, is headed for the open sea out yonder, and as she passes by your Methodist salutes her from his heart: “God bless thee, old ship, and give thee a prosperous voyage!” And let all the people say amen!

But yonder she comes at last! My, what a ship she is! Look at her length; look at her breadth. look at the smoke boiling out of her chimneys, telling of the heart of fire that is burning in her depths; see how her propellers are churning the ocean white as she forges ahead over the leaping waves! And see! Her decks are crowded with people of every nation under heaven, and “all her company rejoicing—glory bursts from every tongue!” It is the grand old Methodist ship—“ ’tis the old ship of Zion, hallelujah!” And as she rounds to, and the gang-plank is thrown out, and your Methodist rushes on board, he lifts up his voice like a trumpet, and cries:

“Come on board this noble vessel!
Sail with us o’er life’s rough sea;
And with us you shall be happy—
Happy through eternity!”

And millions of joyful hearts reply:

“She has landed many thousands,
And she’ll land as many more.
Glory hallelujah!”

AN EXCITED BAPTIST

On one occasion I delivered this address at one of our Annual Conferences. When the old Methodist ship came in sight, the brethren recognized her, and began to shout all over the church. They rushed around the altar shaking hands with me and embracing one another with great enthusiasm. In the midst of this demonstration, I observed a man away back near the door. He seemed very much excited, and, elbowing his way through the mass of shouting Methodists, he reached the chancel where I stood. His whole frame was quivering with excitement, his eyes were flashing, and he exclaimed at the top of his voice: "My dear sir, it will never do! it will never do, sir!" I recognized a prominent member of the Baptist Church, and an ex-Confederate officer, and a most excellent Christian gentleman. I said: "What do you mean? What is it that will never do, Major?" "Why, sir," he thundered, "you can't ship the Campbellites by the Baptist ship!" I said: "Then pitch them overboard, Major! They are used to water—they can swim!" Now, there it was. I was glorifying liberality, and he got his Baptist blood up because he thought I had lumped "the Campbellites," as he called them, in on the Baptist ship!

THE NICKEL-PLATED SHIP

I delivered this address in another place where "the Campbellites" are very numerous. I noticed that the front pew was occupied by a company of intelligent looking men, who paid very close attention to all I said. When the address closed, these men held a little conference with themselves in the corner of the church, and then approaching me, they said: "We are what you called 'Campbellite' preachers. And we have a request to make of you." "All right, brethren," I said; "what can I do for you?" "Well," they said, "we don't like the plight you left us in. We like water, but don't want to be left in it." "Good!" I said; "come on board the old Methodist ship!" "No, no," they said; "that won't do, either." "Then, what?" I said. "I got you into trouble; I will do all I can to get you out. Command me."

"Well," they said, "we think we are old enough now, and big enough, to have a ship of our own. And we want you, when you get that speech off again, to put on one for us." So I have been doing that ever since. Yonder she goes! Nickel-plated, electric

lighted, up-to-date, with rapid-firing guns at every angle. God bless the ship of the Disciples, and speed her on the way!

ALL HAVE RIGHT-OF-WAY.

Now the Methodist Church holds that they are all sailing on the same great ocean of God's love; they are all driven by the same divine power of the Holy Ghost; they are all guided by the same sacred chart of the Bible; they are all commanded by the same captain of salvation—Jesus Christ; they are all engaged in the same glorious work of wafting souls to heaven; and they all reach the same shores over yonder where the city lies, not built by hands, eternal in the heavens. All have the right-of-way across the deep. All are the objects of celestial love. And there is work enough to keep them all engaged. The day has passed when sectarian selfishness can sway the movements of the Church of God. Three great watch-words are burning on the brow of the twentieth century like the very morning stars that herald the millennial dawn, throwing their radiant beams far down the track of ages! They are "Fraternity—Federation—Co-operation." If we are true to the sentiment these words express, we will draw closer to each other in that unity of the spirit that will enable us to co-operate in our efforts to spread the gospel to the earth's remotest bounds. But he who writes the record of the glorious moral struggle of the century will accord to the Pioneers of Methodism in America the honor of first promulgating on these shores that catholic Christianity which has abolished denominational asperities, and made it possible for believers in different creeds to labor together in the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. We honor the Presbyterian Church for its heroic testimony to Christ through the fiery trials of persecution. We honor the Episcopal Church for its noble leadership in Christian culture, and its contributions to the evangelization of the world. We honor the Baptist Church for its devotion and zeal and its splendid evangelical spirit. We honor the Church of the Disciples for its repudiation of ecclesiasticism, its emphasis of the Word of God, and its broad philanthropies. So of others. But we claim for the Methodist Church the honor of genuine catholicity of belief and spirit, a creed which excludes no follower of Christ from fellowship, a religious platform of doctrine on which we can stand and consistently recognize the equal validity of every other branch of

the Church of Christ, a liberal type of Christianity that honestly desires "a league offensive and defensive, with every soldier of Jesus Christ," whether he wears our denominational uniform or not.

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THE EPOCH OF THE PIONEERS.

The age of the Pioneers was one of the greatest epochs in history. It was an era of unparalleled activity and progress. The growing world was emerging from its chrysalis state, and opening its wings to rise and achieve its destiny. The "deep note that Hampden struck" was vibrating around the world, rocking the thrones of Europe with its mighty pulsations, shaking ancient systems into chaos, and giving freedom a voice in every clime. Nations were in commotion, the world was in a ferment with the new life, and all humanity was moved. The heralds of progress were seen upon the mountains, and signal fires flashed from height to height, while the van-guard of a vast advance of humanity was camping along these shores, and the sound of moving hosts was like the noise of the multitudinous seas when swept by stormy winds. Patrick Henry—

"The forest-born Demosthenes,
Whose thunder shook the Phillip of the seas,"

was thrilling a nation with his defiance of oppression. Jefferson was framing the Declaration of Independence, that immortal charter of liberty, that like a beacon fire was to illuminate the world. Washington was lifting high in heaven the sword of freedom, by whose light the patriot hosts were rallying, and swiftly forming in the ranks of war. Franklin was burning in the sky like the very morning star of progress. It was an age of universal unrest, of reform, of revolution, of deep and high resolve on better things. And from the Ganges to the St. Lawrence—from Canada to the Carnatic—the flame of moving standards lit the sky with the red glare of battle, and the tramps of armed legions shook the planet with the energies of mighty change, while—

"Through the shadow of the globe they swept into the younger day,
Crying, forward, forward, let us range!
Let the great world sweep forever down the ringing grooves of change."

AN IMPERIAL HOST.

It was at such a juncture in the tide of time, and amid such commanding activities, and on the ample theatre of this western world, that the Pioneers of Methodism appeared. Amid the tumult of the age, the trumpet of the Lord was heard, sounding the advance of the Church. And lo! the intinerant host of Methodism swept into view, full panoplied in the strength of God, with nodding plumes, and waving swords of fire, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners!" History records how well they did their work. At the surrender of Cornwallis the American officers began cheer, but Washington silenced them with the noble sentiment: "Gentlemen, let posterity cheer for us!" Today we cheer for the Pioneers. Their line has gone out into all the world. They have girdled the globe with their apostolic toil. America rejoices in the fruits of their devoted zeal. In far Japan and ancient China's central gloom, in India and Ceylon, and—

"Where Africa's sunny fountains
Roll down their golden sands,"

and in many a tropic isle that gems the bosom of the heaving sea, the camp-fires of Methodism are burning bright and clear; and the militant itinerant host still lead the pompous triumph on! From the little group of resolute heroes, who gathered in Baltimore a hundred years ago, Methodism has grown to over fifty thousand ministers and twenty millions of adherents. It is rich and powerful and aggressive. Well may we exclaim as we look at this astonishing movement:

"See how great a flame aspires,
Kindled by a spark of grace;
Jesus loves the nation's fires,
Sets the Kingdom on a blaze.

"When He first the work begun,
Small and feeble was His day:
Now the word doth swiftly run;
Now it wins its widening way.

"More and more it spreads and grows,
Ever mighty to prevail;
Sins stronghold now overthrows—
Shakes the trembling gates of hell!"

THE PRESENT.

But it has been truly said that “no church can live on the heroism of its past.” We recall the thrilling story to inspire our hearts for further conquest. At the battle of Platea, which was to decide the liberties of Greece, there arose a contention among the leaders of the Grecian army as to which should have the post of honor, which was also the post of peril, in the coming battle. And some contended that it should be given to the Lacedemonians because of the superior military prowess of Sparta; and some held that it should be given to the Beotians, because the battle was to be fought on the soil of Beotia; and some insisted that it should be given to the Athenians, because of what their fathers did for Greece at Marathon and Salamis. Then the debate was cut short by the noble Aristides, the Athenian general, who exclaimed: “Fellow-citizens, we have not come here to boast of what our ancestors did, but to show what Athenians can do!” So while we gratefully remember the past, and rightly celebrate the splendid triumphs it has known, let us also say we come, not merely to boast of what our forefathers did, but to show what Christians can do! The present demands our loftiest thoughts. We must be better than our fathers to be as good as they. Never was there such an opportunity to spread the gospel as there is today. The political events of the age have opened the world to the heralds of the cross. A thousand signs concur to foretell the advent of that millennial reign of Christ, when the kingdom of darkness shall be destroyed, and perpetual peace and joy shall bless mankind. The earth trembles again with the premonitions of some tremendous change. The powers of heaven are shaking. It behooves the Church to watch and be ready for the Bridegroom when he comes!

THE OUTLOOK.

It is said that when Cortez first climbed to the summit of the mountains, and looked down on the valley of Mexico spread out before him like a dream of enchantment, he stood gazing in silence upon the scene for a long while, as if lost in wonder and admiration at the transcendent view. Then, as if seized by some mighty inspiration, he suddenly drew his sword and waved it around his head until it seemed like circles of fire, and swore by the God of heaven that he would win that land for his king and his Church. O, that we, standing on the summit of the nineteenth century,

and looking down on the twentieth century just before us, unrolling to our vision the most amazing prospect of a regenerated humanity the world has ever known, may gather around the cross, and vow anew upon the altars of our faith, that we will win that century for Christ; till

“ Mightiest kings his power shall own;
 Heathen tribes his name adore;
 Satan and his host, o’erthrown,
 Bound in chains, shall hurt no more ! ”

THE MESSAGE WE BEAR.

On one occasion the great poet, Tennyson, visited a humble Methodist home. As the good woman met him at the door, Mr. Tennyson exclaimed: “ Madame, what news ? ” And the lowly saint replied, her face all radiant with the light of heaven, “ O, Mr. Tennyson, ‘ God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish, but have everlasting life ! ’ ” Then the great poet, whose heart was wrestling with the deepest thoughts of the century, and whose tuneful numbers voiced in music its wildest passions, his own spirit ablaze with the fervor of the truth, exclaimed: “ Madame, that is old news, and new news, and good news ! ” This was the message of the Pioneers. O, that it might be the burden of the ministry of all their successors in these latter days: “ God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish, but have everlasting life. ”

THE MAD APOSTLE.

It is said that among the early Pioneers of Methodism in Canada, there was one who obtained the subriquet of “ the mad apostle. ” He always rode the fleetest horse he could find. Mounted upon his swift steed he would dash madly along the highway until he met a man, when reining in his horse, he would lift his hands, and cry, “ Speed it on ! speed it on ! Tell the whole world the love of Jesus ! ” Then, putting spur, he would rush on at break-neck speed until he met another, when again, pulling rein, he would, with uplifted hands, exclaim: “ Speed it on ! tell the whole world the love of Jesus ! ” O, that the spirit of “ the mad apostle ” were burning in our ranks today ; that we, too, with

flaming zeal like his, might repeat that lofty message; that it might leap from lip to lip, and be heard in every home and along every highway; that it might resound across all the plains, and echo back from every mountain top, and mingle its music with the thunder of the waves on every shore, and articulate its thrilling news on the winds of every clime, and “tell the whole world the love of Jesus”—

“Till earth’s remotest nation
Has learned Messiah’s name!”

THEIR SUCCESSORS.

I have told the story of the Pioneers. What is the thought that should thrill every soul as we recall the immortal record of their work? What is the sentiment that should burn in every breast, as we lift our eyes and behold the ascending pageant of their glory climbing the heavens, and cry: “My father! my father! the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!” O, should it not be the prayer of the prophet left behind: “Let a double portion of their spirit be upon us!” Then, and then only, can we be worthy of the inheritance they left us, and transmit it to those who are to come after us in heightened power. God grant that the memory of the Pioneers may inspire us with ten-fold zeal in the work of spreading scriptural holiness over the world. May the spirit of primitive Methodism burn anew in the hearts of its modern representatives, and the fervor of apostolic enthusiasm set the nations on a blaze, till the mighty work is done—

“And the kingdoms of this world
Are the Kingdoms of His Son!”

AMEN, AMEN!

Notes.

THE RAMBLER appreciates the kind welcome it has received from the public. We regret the unavoidable lapse of the October issue, but will make it up to all of our subscribers. The publication of a monthly is a venture, with many examples of failure to warn us; but we believe that there are enough people to sustain our modest monthly if we can reach them. We will be grateful for all the help our friends can give us in extending the circulation of THE RAMBLER.

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At the present writing, England has cleared her decks for action. She has probably taken advantage of the Fashoda incident to strip for a larger foe. France has too much sense to fight over the Marchand affair, for a war would probably cost her all of her African possessions. It may be that Russia is the undeveloped antagonist for whom England is preparing. A war between these formidable powers would shake the world. Perhaps it must come. Many signs indicate that the forces are closing for some great epochal struggle. The right will win. The eternal years are hers.

* * * *

We must retain the Philippines, not because we are more powerful than Spain, but because Spain can only rule them by methods abhorrent to civilization, and because the events of the war have put us in a relation to them that makes us hereafter in a large measure responsible for their political condition. If philanthropy justified our first interference in Spanish colonial affairs, philanthropy will justify our refusal to return to the control of Spain colonies that have battled against her tyranny for centuries. We don't want the Philippines, but we virtually have them, and can't let them go.

* * * *

It is earnestly to be hoped that the charges of corruption in letting army contracts that are made against the Administration

will not prove true. We would be deeply pained to see President McKinley's escutcheon soiled. He has been wise and conservative, and made a most admirable record. If there has been anything wrong, however, let the search-light be turned on. We are unalterably opposed to getting money by deception, lining our pockets by fat increase of salaries, and then cutting off everybody's head who condemns.

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